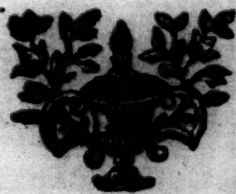


PLAIN AND CANDID
ADDRESS
TO ALL
LOVERS
OF THE
GAME at CARDS.



LONDON:
Printed in the YEAR MDCCLVI.

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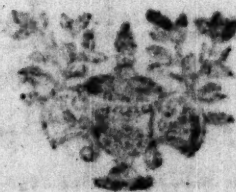
ADDRESSES

TO ALL

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OF THE

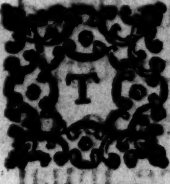
GAME OF CARDS.



LONDON:
Printed in the Year MDCCLXII.



INTRODUCTION

HE principal motive, which induced me to draw up the following *Essay*, proceeded from the great concern, with which, I have long beheld several ranks of my fellow-christians, pursue their sensual pleasures: but especially that steady eagerness, with which many, within the sphere of my acquaintance; are almost, daily, pursuing that branch of amusement, which this tract more immediately relateth to. I mean the low, trifling, unprofitable Time-waster, called *A Game at Cards*: which, however innocent, it may be thought to be, in itself, by many, seems generally to be rendered criminal, by the manner, in which most of its advocates are seen to pursue it, which I shall endeavour, hereafter to shew: In the mean time re-

INTRODUCTION.

ferring the reader to the tract itself. I earnestly wish it may have the desired effect of convincing those (who are so strongly attached to this kind of *diversion*, as to become discontented and unhappy, if they happen to be prevented attending it, at the usual seasons) how unworthy such a pursuit is of a rational Being formed for the contemplation of objects, as far superior to it, as the glorious light of the sun is to the shades of midnight. And if this attempt should prove successful, to reclaim any, from an inordinate love of this amusement, and to regulate their conduct, both in manner and measure, when they engage in it, I shall reckon my self happy, and well rewarded for my undertaking.

PHILANTHROPOS.



PLAIN AND CANDID
ADDRESS, &c.

THE *Spectator** justly observes, "That
 " it is below reasonable creatures to
 " be always conversant in such di-
 " versions as are merely innocent,
 " and have nothing else to recommend them,
 " but that there is no hurt in them; whe-
 " ther any kind of Gaming, has, even, thus
 " much to say for itself, I shall not deter-
 " mine, but I think it is very wonderful to
 " see persons of the best sense passing away
 " many hours together, in shuffling and di-
 " viding a pack of Cards, with no other con-
 " versation, but what is made up of a few
 " game phrases, and no other ideas but those
 " of
 " * No. 39.

“ of black or red spots ranged together, in
 “ different figures. Would not a man laugh
 “ to hear one of this species complaining,
 “ *that life is short.*”

I would now ask multitudes of the present age, who are as doatingly fond of this practice, and more so than our progenitors:— Do we not both old and young unite, to give sanction to this consumer of our time, which is one of our most valuable talents? and not given us by our Creator to be trifled away in mere amusement, as it is by those, who resort as stately to their Cards, as they do to their meals, as if the one was as necessary to relieve their minds, as the other is to support their bodies.

Let us now suppose our time to be divided into two equal parts, I mean the twenty-four hours, which compose the day and night, one part of which, or twelve hours, I will reckon to be chiefly taken up in the necessary refreshments of animal nature, in sleeping, eating and drinking, and I may add, what is also necessarily required, in order to our making a decent appearance, in regard to our apparel: there will then remain about twelve hours more for the duties of religion and of our secular callings. Out of which, the stanch advocates for Cards, must have three or four hours every evening for gratifying their passion for play; and therefore they may be said to consume a fourth part of their
 • precious

precious time; that time which is allotted for the active business and duties of life.—Accordingly, a man who spendeth forty years, in such a course, may be said to consume near ten years of the said term, in a trifling, if not in a pernicious diversion.—Now can this be said to comport well with the scripture command, requiring us *to walk circumspectly, to redeem our time?* * No, this must be accounted squandering time away, our time, in useless engagements, which I am persuaded, will, in the review, rather yield pain, than pleasure, to every thinking, well-disposed mind.

But methinks I hear some say, What is this man about, will he deprive us of lawful recreations? Surely this innocent diversion is much preferable to scandalizing my neighbour, to criticising on his conduct, and ripping up his foibles? I reply that it is so, and of two evils, this is allowed to be the least; but is the one of these the alternative of the other, may not both be avoided? May not our social meetings, be so managed, as to become instructing and improving, as well as entertaining? What is conversation among friends, but interchanging sentiments and communicating knowledge, for mutual entertainment and benefit? The man who has little or no business to follow, ought to employ more of his leisure time, in some health-

ful bodily exercise, and in reading useful authors, to improve his own mind, and lay up a stock of profitable knowledge, out of which treasure, he may always be ready to produce somewhat wise and entertaining, by which he may edify his neighbours, who have not such opportunities for improvement as he himself has.

Time is, without doubt, a great talent given us by our wise and good Creator principally for working out our own salvation, and making a good provision for eternity; and rendering ourselves useful, as we pass through this fleeting life, to our fellow creatures, by doing good, as we have opportunity and ability, both to their souls and bodies. And the greater proportion of time, any man has upon his hands, free from the incumbrance of necessary business, the greater is justly expected from him, this way. For, because he has more leisure hours than the man of business, may he absurdly conclude, that he may, for this reason, lavish them away, in unprofitable, and, I may add, detrimental amusements! For such I may venture to say this game at Cards often proves; it being, I believe, seldom if ever so engaged in, as that it may be pronounced quite innocent, though the sum that is risk'd be but small, such as a man may very well afford to lose, without injuring his fortune or family; because such is the depravity of human nature, that

a very

a very small loss, or disappointment, is apt to stir up and kindle the passions of anger, envy and revenge, which I have frequently observed, even in men; in other respects esteemed wise and good: but when they happen to lose two, or three games successively, can hardly be commonly civil and sociable afterwards, but grow morose, petulant and ill-willed.

This diversion, as every other, must be allowed to be evil, so far as it is ensnaring, in its own nature, and common experience sheweth, that Card-playing has something entangling and bewitching in it, greatly captivating the affections of such as daily give themselves to this way of killing (as the modish phrase is) their precious time.

And is it not a reproach to a Christian, to pursue any diversion, whatever, immoderately?

The great error men are apt to fall into is, that they make not only a business of their pleasure, but even a toil and fatigue, of that which ought to be designed, only, for a relaxation and relief, to unbend the mind from the severity of study, or business, and to turn their food, as it were, into poison. Instead of managing their recreations in such a manner, as to render themselves more fit to employ their time to greater advantage afterwards; it should be their constant care to engage in them, at such times, only, when they cannot properly be

said

said to interfere with any part of their duty which they owe either to God, their neighbour, or themselves.

This and every other amusement, must doubtless be evil, whenever it unfits the mind for spiritual exercises: and therefore every one who has any regard to the advancement of religion, in his own soul, must condemn himself, as guilty of sin, in the sight of God, when he engageth in any such diversions at all, or to such a degree, as shall disqualify him for converse with his Maker. And now let me ask any sober considerate Christian, whether (after he has been engaged for some hours, together, at this sport of shuffling and dividing Cards, and the success of the game should go considerably against him) he does not return home chagrined and uneasy, and perhaps wishing over and over, in his own mind, he had played this and the other Card, rather than what he did; or even that he had not played at all, but stayed away, and employed himself in some more rational and useful pursuit: and can a mind thus agitated and ruffled with uneasy thoughts at the having been so employed, be in a proper frame and disposition for addressing itself to God, and offering, to him, that evening sacrifice of prayer and praise, which I would charitably hope, no one, who calleth himself a Christian, will pretend to plead may be neglected, upon any consideration. For, if
we

we expect our daily bread from our great benefactor, ought we not to ask it daily, at his hands, and to return him our constant praises when we have received it? and always to live and act, as dependant creatures, and not think our time, any more than our other blessings, entirely at our own disposal, to be lavished away, just as we please, but to be improved some way or other to his glory, who gave us our *Being* at first, and holdeth our soul in life. I presume therefore that we never ought to indulge our selves, in amusements or diversions, any further than as they make a part, in a scheme of rational and pious conduct, always remembering that our faculties were not given us, but for important purposes, and that it concerns us to use well the present hour, since we know that a future is not at all, at our command.

Let it be supposed that a person knew before hand the balance of play would go against him, to the loss of three or four games upon an average, would he not, in such a case, decline engaging in it?—And does not this plainly shew that one great motive to pursue this diversion is a love of gain? the indulging of which corrupt appetite certainly tends to promote avarice.

A late ingenious author tells us that “*Cards* were invented by a *French* courtier, to amuse one of the *French* kings, who was remarkably weak.” And then giveth us his senti-

sentiments concerning *Card-playing*, which are as follows :

“ According to the present reigning taste
 “ for *Cards*, they cannot but dissipate the
 “ thoughts and enervate the mind: in almost
 “ every one, who is closely attached to them,
 “ they must be a great means of feeding
 “ those passions which corrode the heart, and
 “ by warping the affections from their proper
 “ bias, oppose the establishment of virtue in the mind.—We often see this,
 “ though few will confess it. Is it possible
 “ for those who give a constant application
 “ to this entertainment, especially if they
 “ play high, to support a tranquility of mind?
 “ And in proportion as the mind is disturbed
 “ it is disqualified for the essential duties
 “ of life. This is best understood by those
 “ who spend their time, in this polite idleness.”

To this we may subjoin the absurd and ridiculous notions, most of our Card-players abound with, such heathen non-entities and fictions, as are called *Luck* and *Fortune*—which brings to mind another ridiculous custom, amongst them—the taking the winning seats, as they are foolishly called, at every new Game. One is here tempted to think they believe there is some reality in such appearances, or their better sense and judgment would not be thus misguided by such fallacies, to the utter exclusion of his
 over-ruling

over-ruling providence *whose eyes run too and fro, thro'out the Earth, beholding the evil and the good, and who disposeth all events.* How little soever this may be credited by professed Gamesters, or others, every wise and good man, will doubtless assent to a truth, for which we have the authority of our divine Law-giver and Judge*.

And now *Christian Reader*, give me leave to ask you, whether this Game be not really detrimental, in its tendency, infatuating in its influence, and whether its lawfulness may not justly be called in question, and if it be not safest and wisest to refrain from it entirely, since we are commanded in the New Testament *to abstain from all appearance of evil* † and to maintain a conscience void of offence towards God and man? ‡

An action, tho' lawful, in itself, may become sinful, thro' some circumstances, which attend it; as the Apostle's words imply, when he says § all things are lawful for me, *i. e.* tho' it be granted that all those things of which I have been speaking are lawful, they are not all expedient.—*Happy is he who condemneth not himself, in that thing which he alloweth, he that doubteth is damned, if he eat* ||. *i. e.* is condemned in the sight of God, as a sinner, if he doth it to please an unbridled appetite, out of complaisance, as to avoid reproach.

* Prov. xv. 3. and Matt. x. 29. † 1 Thess. v. 22.

‡ Acts xxiv. 16. § 1 Cor. x. 23. || Rom. xiv. ult.

reproach.—A man is criminal, in that action, which he performeth not of faith, for whatsoever is not of faith is sin, *i. e.* where he has not a persuasion in his own mind, that God allows and approveth of the action : for the divine authority ought to be so sacred with every man, as to engage him, not only to avoid, what is plainly contrary to it; but what he even suspects to be so : and both the purity and tranquility of our minds depend on the reverence we pay to God and conscience the restraints of our holy religion : the rules of which, will ever be found perfectly consistent with our true interest and happiness. Let us then deal faithfully with, and reverence the gentlest whispers of conscience, and not run the utmost lengths, even in what may be possibly lawful, lest we run into what is sinful.

Mankind have endeavoured to vindicate their wandring, in cases clearly wrong, by a thousand excuses, such as custom, fashion, interest, dread of singularity ; and perhaps many are byassed, by the above-mentioned pretences and motives to engage, in the practice, of Card-playing, which is now become so general and notorious, in all ranks and conditions of men and women.—Let the young, especially, be admonished to beware of false guides, and of following a multitude to do evil. Let the dictates of conscience be revered, notwithstanding the clamors of these

those, who fear not God : lest we grieve the holy spirit and provoke him to depart from us, and we be exposed to the power of every temptation.

It is a happy thing for a man to be quite easy, and satisfied, in what he does ; and free not only from the reproaches, but the suspicions of his conscience : this is the way to make life easy, and comfortable, and death not only safe, but desirable.

Such is the great variety in the natural temper of men, that a thing may prove a temptation to one, which is not so to another.—If then, upon examination, I find the diversion of Cards, hath drawn me into sin, or engaged my affections, beyond the rules of prudence, reason and religion, or any ways ensnared me ; it is to me forbidden fruit : And do I not daily pray, that God would not lead me into Temptation, but deliver me from Evil—and dare I then deliberately run myself into it ?

— As too quick succession of pleasure (says
 “ one) sensualises the heart and unites it too
 “ strongly to the world ; it makes you over-
 “ fond of life, and afraid of death ; it so softens
 “ the mind, that it sinks under adversity.
 “ Pleasure and Infidelity reciprocally ge-
 “ nerate each other ; he that would reduce
 “ one, must strike at both, one seizes the
 “ body and the other the mind : and that
 C 2 “ a love

" alove of pleasure is the root of every crime :
 " and that pleasure, under the garb of being
 " harmless, has an opiate in it, that stupi-
 " fies and besots us ; in pleasures soft lap,
 " conscience falls asleep. Happiness is our
 " study, but we either know not, or seem
 " not to know, that all real enjoyment
 " lies within the compass of God's com-
 " mands, which abridge not, but de-
 " fend it. When we dip too deep, into
 " pleasure, we stir up a sediment, that ren-
 " ders it impure and noxious ; No joys are
 " always sweet and flourish long, but such
 " as have self approbation, for their root, and
 " God's favour for their shelter : too much
 " recreation tires, as well as too much busi-
 " ness : yet one we swallow, and are choak-
 " ed, by the other. The true man of plea-
 " sure is he who gives the animal, ra-
 " tional and immortal their respective dues,
 " and admits of all secular enjoyments, that
 " are consistent with his Supreme." And ~~the~~
other ~~same~~ author, speaking of Time, says, " The
 " supreme Lord marks the progress of our life,
 " in his kalender above ; and does not this
 " tell us, it was given for use, not for waste ;
 " that no portion of it is delivered but under
 " a strict account, and that all is entered in
 " the divine register, as it passes ; therefore
 " the stewards of such a talent are to expect
 " a future reckoning.

" O TIME

- " O TIME than gold more sacred :
 " Part with it, as with money sparing ; pay
 " No moment, but, in purchase of its worth,
 " And what its worth ? ask death-beds
 " they can tell.
 " Part with it as with life reluctant,
 " Big with holy hope of nobler time to come.
 " The man is yet unborn, who duly weighs
 an hour.
 " *I've lost a day.* The prince who nobly cry'd,
 " Had been a Conqueror without his crown.
 " So should all speak, so reason speaks in all,
 " From the soft whispers of that God in man.
 " Why fly to folly ? Why to frenzy fly ?
 " For rescue, from the blessing we possess.
 " TIME the Supreme : TIME is Eternity ;
 " Pregnant with all, eternity can give ;
 " Who murders Time, he crushes in the
 birth,
 " A power ætherial, only not ador'd.
 " Ah ! how unjust to nature, and himself,
 " Is thoughtless, thankless, inconsistent man !
 " We censure nature for a span too short,
 " That span too short, we tax, as tedious too ;
 " Torture invention, all expedients tire,
 " To lash the lingering moments into speed,
 " And whirl us (happy riddance) from
 ourselves."

If our Time be thus important, it highly
 becomes us all to consider, whether our work
 be

be advanced, as far as our time, of which perhaps the best, as well as the greatest part is already gone? Our acceptance with God, and our eternal condition inevitably depend on our present time. Our trifling with it, then, must be consummate folly. Men are scarce so lavish with any of their talents, as with their time, it is now-adays thought an high attainment to know how to kill it.

The days and years we have, already, lived, are irrecoverably gone and have given in their testimony for, or against us, according as they were spent: the remainder lessens continually, and our account is increasing: what need then is there to contrive how to consume that, which flies swifter than any thing besides?

Though we can scarce call any thing our own, but Time, yet every body cheats out of it, that will. Therefore let the following consideration, be ever present to our minds, as a powerful inducement to a wise and proper disposition of our lives; that he who is not at leisure, many times, to live, must when his hour is come, be at leisure to die, whether he is fit, or unfit, and whether he will or not.

I hope 'ere this, I have said enough to influence every candid, serious and well-disposed Christian, to a more honourable, advantageous employment of his vacant hours, than idling them away, at the Card-table, in arranging and sorting a parcel of painted toys,
more

more fit to amuse children, than men of sense, and that this short Address may at least abate that unbecoming zeal and resolution, with which numbers pursue this childish diversion.

Presuming this, I would finish the Dissertation, with a particular address to three orders of men, namely—Ministers of the Gospel, Parents, and Masters of Families.

First to Gospel Ministers. I need not inform you my friends, that God's all-wise providence, has set you up, as Lights in the world: to be eminent for goodness, both in precept and example. Let not your practice, then, deny, what your doctrine defends;—Let not any who hear you, have it in their power to say, My Minister sets me this example; and comes as currently to the Card-table, as any of his hearers. Our holy religion is blasphemed, when those, who undertake to preach it to others, are strangers to its purity and rebels to its authority:—By your conduct, then, let it appear, that you not only preach the Gospel, but live according to it. And if you do so, you will *abstain from every appearance of evil*. That Minister of Jesus Christ is best regarded and most to be esteemed, whose life is a bright exemplification of the Holy Gospel, which he preacheth.

“ After your faithful endeavours to please
 “ all men, for their good; if you strongly
 “ oppose the fashionable errors and vices of
 “ the

“ the times, you may perhaps please but
 “ few, but if God and your consciences, be
 “ of this number, you are safe and happy.
 “ He who is not a good man, cannot be a
 “ good Minister. It becometh Ministers to
 “ be, not only regular, but eminent, in every
 “ grace: and unless their lives are as irreproach-
 “ able as their doctrine (humane infirmities
 “ excepted) their claim to an indelible cha-
 “ racter is vain.

I would next address myself to Parents.

As God has entrusted you with the educa-
 tion of your off-spring; see to it that you set
 them an example of every thing that is vir-
 tuous and praise-worthy: training them up
 in the ways of religion and virtue, and prac-
 tice nothing before them, that you would
 not have them engage in, either in early life,
 or more advanced years. And if any of you
 are conscious to yourselves, that you have been a
 good deal addicted to this mean, trifling di-
 version of Card-playing at the expence of
 your precious Time, I would earnestly in-
 treat you to desist from it, as ever you would
 avoid setting an ill example before your chil-
 dren, and introducing them into a practice,
 which, by slow degrees, may become a con-
 firmed habit of Idleness: and for ought you
 know, may so strongly engage their affec-
 tions, as that their love to this Game, may
 increase, till at length, they being unable to
 overcome it, may hereby be involved in re-
 mediless

mediless distress, if not the utter ruin of estate, soul and body: For who can tell how great a fire a little matter may kindle? And what dire reflections must such a consequence occasion to a parent, when he comes to consider, that by initiating his Child, when young and tender, in the Art of Gaming, he was sowing the seeds of perdition in his soul. The pious Mr. *Harvey* observes, “that the principles we imbibe and the habits we contract, in our early years, are not matters of small moment, but of the utmost consequence: they not only give a transient or superficial tincture to our first appearance in life, but most commonly stamp the form of our whole future conduct, and even of our eternal state.”

Let Parents then be always upon their guard, lest they learn or allow, their children to do, any thing the consequences of which may probably prove so pernicious to their immortal interests, as the frequenting the Card-table may prove.

I would lastly apply my self to Masters of Families.

One great source of Religion, or of the contrary, is the regular, or irregular management of private families—as reason and experience shew us. Masters, set your servants a good example.—Example influenceth the world, in general,—and either promotes its true happiness, or mightily injures it, accord-

ing as it is good, or evil: and you may therefore justly conclude your servants will have their drinking seasons at the ale-house as you have your Gaming ones, at the Assembly, the Rout, or the Tavern. And how can you reasonably expect, it should be otherwise, when you so deliberately and almost daily set them such an example? And when they know your stated hours for the Card-table as well as they know those allotted for your meals — may not your servants come home drunken and debauched at night, when you give them so fair and frequent opportunities for it? And how can you with any propriety blame them for a conduct which you give them such occasion for, under the very roof of the house in which their own Masters are squandering away their precious and invaluable time? Permit me therefore to intreat and beseech you to let your Light so shine before men, and especially those of your own house, as that they by seeing your wise and prudent behaviour, may glorify your Father who is in heaven. But that I may not trespass on my reader's patience any further, I will add only a few serious and striking lines from that excellent writer Dr. *Young* (to whom I am so much indebted already) concerning *old Age*.

“ What is innocence, in youth, may be
 “ vice, in years. — Men in years and the
 “ Clergy, are the natural supports of virtue
 “ and

“ and religion. Should not we leave the
 “ world before the world leaves us? There
 “ is a noble absence from earth, while we
 “ are yet on it; and there is a nobler
 “ intimacy with heaven while we are yet
 “ beneath it; Death forgot in years, is
 “ folly, in age---madness: Age is the post
 “ of wisdom, if ever men are wise. Eternity
 “ has so often passed our lips, that it has for-
 “ got the way to our hearts, and if it did
 “ ever enter there, it would extinguish
 “ every earth-born passion, in it, as the sun the
 “ smallest spark of fire. When they who
 “ have reason to be wise, are farthest from
 “ it, it sinks the dignity of our common
 “ nature, and brings, beyond all other enor-
 “ mities, a reproach, on mankind. No-
 “ thing can be in credit, that is out of
 “ character.”

F I N I S.

